

EDO SUSHI EXPRESS

Sushi with Heart!

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2015

CYNTHIA TUN, PRESIDENT

EDO SUSHI EXPRESS IS A CONNECTICUT-BASED, WOMAN-OWNED & CERTIFIED CORPORATION

I am here today to testify in support of S.B. 111. An Act Concerning Sushi Rice. I want to thank Senator Rob Kane and Representative Eric Berthel for their sponsorship of this bill and their support.

The main idea behind this bill is to gain consistency for sushi chefs across the state. Most sushi chefs speak English as a second language, and when they go into a health district they must meet the demands of the health inspector. The problem with this is that each health inspector has a different idea about what makes sushi rice safe. In one case the health inspector insisted that a sushi chef roll sushi at 155°F. The sushi chef scalded his hands meeting that demand. In another case a health inspector demanded that sushi rice be at 55°F when rolling sushi. It was literally impossible for the sushi chef to mold the rice as required for making sushi.

In each of these cases, and others as well, the health inspector had no comprehension of sushi rice and how sushi is made. Over-regulation and fear of the unknown makes it very difficult for sushi chefs and sushi vendors in Connecticut. This is the reason I had my original conversation with Rob Kane. I was happily surprised when he introduced this bill so it could move forward.

Sushi rice is steamed rice. It is steamed with water and Kombu seaweed until it reaches the appropriate consistency. A specific recipe is followed. After the rice is steamed, rice vinegar, sugar and salt is mixed into the rice before it cools. The pH of the rice must be 4.1 or below. Mayonnaise is far safer than people think because of its acidity and pH level.

Here's What the Experts Say:

"Commercial mayonnaise is among the safest of foods when properly handled. Most harmful bacteria die off within hours in the presence of mayonnaise, largely due to its high acidity."

Michael P. Doyle, Ph.D., Professor and Director, University of Georgia, CENTER FOR FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

"Commercial mayonnaise and other commercial dressings are prepared under strict quality controls, and acidulents and salt are added that prevent the growth of food-poisoning bacteria. In fact, hazardous bacteria die off if placed in the commercially prepared product."

Douglas L. Archer, Ph.D., Chair, UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA, DEPARTMENT OF FOOD SCIENCE AND NUTRITION former Acting Deputy Director, CENTER FOR FOOD SAFETY AND APPLIED NUTRITION

900 Main Street
Oakville, CT 06779
(860) 274-6258
(860) 274-6295 fax
www.edosushiexpress.com

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Of course I am speaking of sushi rice. But, sushi rice is similar to mayonnaise because of the salt and acidifying agent, vinegar, which is added. I refer you to the book created in 2004 by the AFDO, (Association of Food and Drug Officials). I am attaching this book with my testimony. This book is titled, "Guidance for Processing Sushi in Retail Operations." The committees and people responsible for developing this book are from the FDA, several Depts. of Agricultures, supermarkets and other organizations. I quote from this book:

"The production time and final acid level (pH) is recorded for each batch of sushi rice. Acidified rice has an initial measurable, targeted pH of 4.1 and should be thoroughly mixed to assure the rice does not exceed an equilibrium pH of 4.6 (Appendix 2 - Sushi Rice). **Properly acidified rice is not considered a potentially hazardous food.**" (Bold and underline are mine)

Please note that sushi chefs must all be trained in HACCP standards. Accurate and careful pH logs must be kept to ensure that the pH of each batch of rice is appropriate. However, the over-reliance by the state of Connecticut on temperature is truly not needed. It is over-regulation of an important part of the food industry.

Connecticut is a difficult state in which to do business. The over-regulation and micro-management of business and industry is one reason why a business will flee the state rather than stay and work. This anti-business attitude must come to an end, and one area of this change in attitude can be found in coming to a deeper understanding of how business functions.

I respectfully request that you look again at our over-regulation and under-education of our health departments. Look at the information I am providing to you; and create a law which allows sushi bars to operate consistently throughout the state.

Thank you.

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